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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL AF TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY SUPPORTS AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY INCREASE

REF: SECSTATE 93225

Classified By: Political Military Counselor Anthony Godfrey, reasons 1.
4 (b,d)

TURKEY SUPPORTS ANA INCREASE

¶1. (C) We delivered reftel points to MFA DDG for South Asia and Iran Babur Hizlan September 3, requesting Turkish support for expanding the Afghan National Army (ANA) to 134,000 at the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting in Kabul, September 10, and reminding him of the importance the U.S. attaches to Turkey easing the caveats it places on the operation of Turkish troops in Afghanistan. Hizlan reiterated Turkey's support for the proposed ANA expansion; the Turkish Embassy in Kabul has been directed to support the measure. Hizlan could make no commitments concerning Turkish funding for a proposed multi-donor trust fund to support ANA sustainment, but underscored Turkey's support for "train and equip programs," similar to those Turkey implemented successfully in Bosnia. The Turkish General Staff is particularly enthusiastic, Hizlan said, about expanding existing programs to train Afghan units in Turkey, but he could not say how extensive Turkish training would be. Turkey, according to Hizlan, wants to change the negative perception of the war in Afghanistan as being fought by foreign troops. It supports strengthening ANA to fight its own war, and "train and equip programs" are the best instrument, he said.

¶2. (C) The GOT is not optimistic about trends in Afghanistan, said Hizlan. Operating a PRT in Wardak, it sees Taliban influence increasing there. He noted Taliban control in many nearby districts, outside of Kabul, and a growing Taliban operation capacity within Kabul. Turkey is also concerned about growing Taliban influence in Pashtun enclaves in Turkic provinces of northern Afghanistan.

DOSTUM PROBLEM STILL UNRESOLVED

¶3. (C) MFA Deputy U/S for Middle East and South Asia Sinirlioglu will travel to Kabul September 13 and will raise concerns that Rashid Dostum has not yet been permitted by Kabul to return north despite the completion of a democratic Junbesh party election in which Dostum did not stand, as Turkey promised. Sensing political machinations by President Karzai, the GOT is frustrated that this situation has persisted even as former Attorney General Sabit is no longer in government pressing the case against Dostum.

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